

REMARKS

Claims 7-21 are pending in the present application. Claims 7, 8 and 16 have been amended to correct minor antecedent errors. No new matter was added.

Applicants acknowledge the remarks in the Office Action regarding the Information Disclosure Statement filed July 28, 2000. Since that statement submitted a translation of an Official Action issued in a corresponding Taiwanese application, which action cited a Taiwanese Patent corresponding to EP 0 745 367, previously cited and considered by the Examiner, Applicants believe further action is not needed. Applicants are not aware of other art which was to be submitted or considered with the IDS of July 28, 2000.

Claim 16 was objected to and claims 7-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. In view of the amendments to claims 7, 8 and 16, Applicants respectfully request that the objection and rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 7-12 and 16-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Schulte et al. (U.S. Patent Number 6,156,024). Claims 13-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Schulte et al., and claims 20-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Schulte et al. in further view of Sivilich (U.S. Patent Number 5,669,902). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections in view of the Declaration Under 37 C.F.R. §1.131, submitted herewith, illustrating the reduction to practice of the claimed invention prior to the earliest publication date of Schulte et al. Applicants note that Exhibit B has been redacted only to eliminate extraneous information. In view thereof, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections over Schulte et al. be withdrawn.

Applicants believe they have responded to all matters raised in the above referenced Office Action and that the application is now in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any questions concerning this Application or this Reply and Amendment, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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**Attachment to Amendment dated December 13, 2001
Marked-up Copy of Claims**

7. (Twice Amended) An absorbent article that includes longitudinally extending side extremities, an absorbent body disposed between a liquid-impermeable bottom sheet, which is intended to lie distal from a wearer in use, and a liquid-permeable upper sheet which is intended to lie proximal to a wearer, and either:

1) at least one longitudinally extending elastic liquid barrier on each side of a center line of the upper sheet, the barrier being made of an essentially liquid-impervious material and fastened to the upper or bottom sheet along or adjacent to a respective longitudinally extending side extremity of the article and having a free sealing edge facing towards a wearer, or

2) above the upper sheet, an essentially liquid-impermeable top sheet which is intended to lie against a wearer, and which includes elastic for shaping the article to a wearer's body, and includes apertures intended to lie in register with an anus and a urethra orifice of a wearer, around which apertures elastically puckered sealing edges are disposed in the top sheet;

wherein at least said sealing edge of 1) or said sealing edges of 2) are treated with a non-adhesive sealing medium which, in use, at least partly fills out any through-penetrating pores which are formed between said sealing edge of 1) or sealing edges of 2) and an abutment part of a wearer's skin, and/or which, when the article is donned, smears said abutment [skin] part of a wearer's skin and thereby increases a liquid-skin wetting angle.

8. (Twice Amended) The absorbent article according to claim 7, wherein said sealing edge of 1) or said sealing edges of 2) are coated with said sealing medium in an amount sufficient to both partly fill out any pores and to smear said abutment [skin] part of a wearer's skin.

16. (Twice Amended) The absorbent article according to Claim 7, wherein said sealing medium has rheological properties such that said medium will be essentially rigid and viscous at room temperature and sufficiently fluid to smear [the] said wearer's skin at body temperature.